

properly be addressed in a hearing under this part.

[61 FR 65468, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.203 Rights of parties.

(a) Except as otherwise limited by this part, all parties may:

(1) Be accompanied, represented, and advised by an attorney;

(2) Participate in any conference held by the ALJ;

(3) Conduct discovery of documents as permitted by this part;

(4) Agree to stipulations of fact or law which will be made part of the record;

(5) Present evidence relevant to the issues at the hearing;

(6) Present and cross-examine witnesses;

(7) Present oral arguments at the hearing as permitted by the ALJ; and

(8) Submit written briefs and proposed findings of fact and conclusions of law after the hearing.

(b) Fees for any services performed on behalf of a party by an attorney are not subject to the provisions of section 206 of title II of the Social Security Act, which authorizes the Commissioner to specify or limit these fees.

[61 FR 65469, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.204 Authority of the administrative law judge.

(a) The ALJ will conduct a fair and impartial hearing, avoid delay, maintain order and assure that a record of the proceeding is made.

(b) The ALJ has the authority to:

(1) Set and change the date, time, and place of the hearing upon reasonable notice to the parties;

(2) Continue or recess the hearing in whole or in part for a reasonable period of time;

(3) Hold conferences to identify or simplify the issues, or to consider other matters that may aid in the expeditious disposition of the proceeding;

(4) Administer oaths and affirmations;

(5) Issue subpoenas requiring the attendance of witnesses at hearings and the production of documents at or in relation to hearings;

(6) Rule on motions and other procedural matters;

(7) Regulate the scope and timing of documentary discovery as permitted by this part;

(8) Regulate the course of the hearing and the conduct of representatives, parties, and witnesses;

(9) Examine witnesses;

(10) Receive, exclude, or limit evidence;

(11) Take official notice of facts;

(12) Upon motion of a party, decide cases, in whole or in part, by summary judgment where there is no disputed issue of material fact; and

(13) Conduct any conference or argument in person, or by telephone upon agreement of the parties.

(c) The ALJ does not have the authority to:

(1) Find invalid or refuse to follow Federal statutes or regulations, or delegations of authority from the Commissioner;

(2) Enter an order in the nature of a directed verdict;

(3) Compel settlement negotiations;

(4) Enjoin any act of the Commissioner or the Inspector General; or

(5) Review the exercise of discretion by the Office of the Inspector General to seek to impose a civil monetary penalty or assessment under §§ 498.100 through 498.132.

[61 FR 65469, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.205 Ex parte contacts.

No party or person (except employees of the ALJ's office) will communicate in any way with the ALJ on any matter at issue in a case, unless on notice and opportunity for all parties to participate. This provision does not prohibit a person or party from inquiring about the status of a case or asking routine questions concerning administrative functions or procedures.

[61 FR 65469, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.206 Prehearing conferences.

(a) The ALJ will schedule at least one prehearing conference, and may schedule additional prehearing conferences as appropriate, upon reasonable notice to the parties.

(b) The ALJ may use prehearing conferences to address the following:

(1) Simplification of the issues;

(2) The necessity or desirability of amendments to the pleadings, including the need for a more definite statement;

(3) Stipulations and admissions of fact as to the contents and authenticity of documents and deadlines for challenges, if any, to the authenticity of documents;

(4) Whether the parties can agree to submission of the case on a stipulated record;

(5) Whether a party chooses to waive appearance at a hearing and to submit only documentary evidence (subject to the objection of other parties) and written argument;

(6) Limitation of the number of witnesses;

(7) The time and place for the hearing and dates for the exchange of witness lists and of proposed exhibits;

(8) Discovery of documents as permitted by this part;

(9) Such other matters as may tend to encourage the fair, just, and expeditious disposition of the proceedings; and

(10) Potential settlement of the case.

(c) The ALJ shall issue an order containing the matters agreed upon by the parties or ordered by the ALJ at a pre-hearing conference.

[61 FR 65469, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.207 Discovery.

(a) For the purpose of inspection and copying, a party may make a request to another party for production of documents which are relevant and material to the issues before the ALJ.

(b) Any form of discovery other than that permitted under paragraph (a) of this section, such as requests for admissions, written interrogatories and depositions, is not authorized.

(c) For the purpose of this section, the term documents includes information, reports, answers, records, accounts, papers, memos, notes and other data and documentary evidence. Nothing contained in this section will be interpreted to require the creation of a document, except that requested data stored in an electronic data storage system will be produced in a form accessible to the requesting party.

(d)(i) A party who has been served with a request for production of documents

may file a motion for a protective order. The motion for protective order shall describe the document or class of documents to be protected, specify which of the grounds in § 498.207(d)(2) are being asserted, and explain how those grounds apply.

(2) The ALJ may grant a motion for a protective order if he or she finds that the discovery sought:

(i) Is unduly costly or burdensome;

(ii) Will unduly delay the proceeding; or

(iii) Seeks privileged information.

(3) The burden of showing that discovery should be allowed is on the party seeking discovery.

[61 FR 65469, Dec. 13, 1996]

§ 498.208 Exchange of witness lists, witness statements and exhibits.

(a) At least 15 days before the hearing, the parties shall exchange:

(1) Witness lists;

(2) Copies of prior written statements of proposed witnesses; and

(3) Copies of proposed hearing exhibits, including copies of any written statements that the party intends to offer in lieu of live testimony in accordance with § 498.216.

(b)(1) Failure to comply with the requirements of paragraph (a) of this section may result in the exclusion of evidence or testimony upon the objection of the opposing party.

(2) When an objection is entered, the ALJ shall determine whether good cause justified the failure to timely exchange the information listed under paragraph (a) of this section. If good cause is not found, the ALJ shall exclude from the party's case-in-chief:

(i) The testimony of any witness whose name does not appear on the witness list; and

(ii) Any exhibit not provided to the opposing party as specified in paragraph (a) of this section.

(3) If the ALJ finds that good cause exists, the ALJ shall determine whether the admission of such evidence would cause substantial prejudice to the objecting party due to the failure to comply with paragraph (a) of this section. If the ALJ finds no substantial